

2013 Needs Assessment for Limestone County

Jeanne W. Anderson

Caroline Page
Dr. Tom Sisk
Trish Montgomery
Robert Valls
Deborah Cain
Donna Shelton
Hon. Brian Jones
Hon. Claire Jones
Sen. Tom Holtzclaw
Rep. Dan Williams
Rep. Mickey Hammon
Commissioner Stanley Menefee
Sheriff Mike Blakely
Chief Floyd Johnson
Chief David Whitt
Suzanne Rainey

Capt. Fred Sloss
Dep. Tim McNeill
Dep. Steve Croley
Dep. Dean Murray
Dep. Bobby McCormick
Dep. Mike Boyles
Shannon Cameron
DeAnna McNeill
Sonya Anthony
Sarah Chadwell
Dwayne Clark
Amber Anderson
Susan McGrady
Felicia Hanserd
Hon. Jerry Batts
Jennifer Zimmerman

Tiki Hubbard
April Clement
Becky Bentley
Lisa Anderson
Whitney Gullett
Zebbra Green

Accomplishments

It has been a wonderful year for the Limestone County Children's Policy Council!

Our Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) again had a very busy year. The CAC was a long time dream of our Children's Policy Council and we celebrate their success. The CAC currently has a Parenting After Trauma group being offered to caretakers of children who have been victims of violence or serious abuse. The group is open to parents, extended family, friends and foster parents.

The Family Resource Center (FRC) continues to expand services under the director, Sarah Chadwell. We are very proud of the Parents as Teachers Baby Boutique. This program provides parents of young children and opportunity to earn "baby bucks" when they make good parenting choices. Parents earn "baby bucks" by participating in PAT home visits, participating in PAT group events, participating in FRC family events, enrolling in WIC, enrolling their child in AllKids, scheduling and keeping doctor and dentist appointments, and staying up to date on immunization records. Once earned "baby bucks" are able to be spent in the Baby Boutique. Items include diapers, wipes, formula, clothing, bedding and toys.

Also the Prenatal Parents as Teachers Program is providing education and support to pregnant mothers to ensure a healthy baby and healthy family environment. All pregnant mothers are eligible.

The Youth Community Service Program is a venture by the FRC that places youth in community service. As part of sentencing, juveniles ages 12 and up are placed in businesses and community events to volunteer as they are supervised by a liaison from the FRC.

Family Solutions is another great program offered to our community by the FRC. This program provides one on one assistance regarding assessment, addressing needs of the family and referrals. Participants can remain in program as long as needed.

The FRC hosts a monthly meeting called Step Up. Step Up is held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Rogers Center on the square. Step Up is for anyone who is interested in collaboration and improving Social Services in our Athens Limestone Community. Each meeting provides an ability to

network with other agencies and learn about new or existing social services.

The LAUNCH Program is now housed in the FRC. LAUNCH provides support for out of school youth (ages 16-21) needing assistance in education and life planning.

Several other programs continue to thrive at the FRC despite budget cuts. Career Link provides career consultation in support of employment, resume' creation, and education opportunities. Crisis Services otherwise know as Hope Place provides support for women and men experiencing domestic violence in a relationship. Legal Services comes to the FRC on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month to offer in-person consultation with Legal Services of Alabama.

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Limestone County continue to expand programs in the areas of education, arts, character leadership, sports and fitness, and healthy lifestyles. This year, 34 children were enrolled in the Reading Academy. The Reading Academy is lead by a certified teacher who works with children k-3 who are not at their reading level. Another new program that we are so proud of is the Urgent Intervention program that addresses teens who were failing in school. 100% of Limestone County teens who participated in Urgent Intervention were passing within 2 grading periods (18 weeks). Nutritious snacks were provided free to participants every day. As a direct result of this program, 99.6% of Boys and Girls Club members passed this school year in Limestone County! This was the highest percentage ever achieved by the Club.

The Limestone County Department of Mental health is offering a Summer Day Camp beginning in June for 8 weeks. The camp gives children education opportunities, summer activities and continuation of medication. Transportation is provided.

The PEACE project and Life Skills classes offered by the Mental Health Center NCA have been a great success in Limestone County. PEACE stands for Promoting Emotional Adjustments through Core Values and Education. It is an educational program designed to help participants increase problem-solving and assertiveness skills, identify the emotions underlying anger and aggression and how to change them, and gain greater personal power and responsibility. Life Skills empowers families with the basic tools for success.

The Department of Human Resources continues to work hard to serve our children despite loss of personnel and budget cuts. Trainings for this year include Safety Assessment, Childhood Trauma, Effects of Social Work on Social Workers, drug related training and many other local trainings to improve the casework and knowledge of our social workers. Supervisors received numerous additional trainings on permanency, safety, and overall casework in all areas of CPS/Foster care.

Our county school truancy program continues to be strong with the aid of School Resource Officers assisting with truants when 5 absences are reached. All School Resource Officers and the Limestone County Truancy Officer attended the TAASRO conference and received specialized training on recent changes in juvenile law. The Limestone County Commission and the Limestone County Board of Education are working together to place a full-time School Resource Officer in every school in Limestone County, including our elementary schools. When school begins this fall, Limestone County will have the largest School Resource Officer Unit in the state.

Another exciting program that began this year in Limestone County is the Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program of Alabama (T.I.P.). The program offers services to the Limestone County Juvenile Court that include educational information and sessions that promote awareness, prevention, research (assessments) and advocacy in regard to school truancy. These services are offered to school-aged children ages 5 to 18. This program is designed to reduce truancy among students and improve educational performance. This program works strongly to reduce the drop-out and delinquency rates of truant children.

2013 Needs Assessment for Limestone County

First Priority

Need related to children of this county

CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
All Kids Sarrell Dental Center Athens Limestone Family Resource Center Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama Athens Limestone Hospital Athens Limestone Mental Health Center Limestone County Health Department Athens Lions Club All Kids	Public transportation Additional funding to bridge gaps Additional Mental Health Services for children under 13 years of age

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

1. Continue to support the Family Resource Center (FRC) and these programs being offered to help children be healthy: Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Prenatal Parents as Teachers Program.
2. Raise awareness of the FRC Baby Boutique. This is part of the PAT program and parents are eligible to earn "Baby Bucks" by participating in home visits, group events, enrolling in WIC, enrolling in AllKids, scheduling and keeping doctor and dentist appointments, and children's immunizations. They are then able to purchase items such as diapers, wipes, formula, clothing, bedding, toys, etc. in the Baby Boutique.
3. Public transportation is a problem in Limestone County. Parents need assistance traveling to participate in programs and in getting children to the appropriate facilities for medical appointments.

2013 Needs Assessment for Limestone County

Second Priority

Need related to children of this county

CHILDREN ARE SAFE

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
Limestone Co. Department of Human Resources Limestone County Child Advocacy Center Limestone County District Attorney's Office Limestone County Sheriff's Office City of Athens Police Department Limestone County Juvenile Probation Office Limestone County Community Corrections Salvation Army Lexi House Hands Home	Local Shelters Local Long Term Residential Treatment Additional Drug Prevention Programs

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

1. A large number of dependency cases in Limestone County are filed due to drug issues of the parents. Parents are not able to meet their children's needs because of their addictions. Limestone County needs a local long term residential drug treatment facility.
2. Work to increase number of participants in Drug Court. Limestone County is seeing tremendous success in their drug court graduates. Drug free parents are able to work toward stronger families.
3. More foster parents are needed in Limestone County.
4. Work with the District Attorney's office to expedite child abuse cases. If child abuse was committed by a parent or guardian, a delayed court hearing often affects the permanency of the child.

2013 Needs Assessment for Limestone County

Third Priority

Need related to children of this county

FAMILIES ARE STRONG AND STABLE

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
Athens Limestone Family Resource Center Parents as Teachers Program Family Solutions Program Limestone County Department of Human Resources PEACE project Life Skills Class Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program of Alabama	Marriage classes Additional funding for continued support of existing programs

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

1. The Kid's Count report reflected that the total number of children in poverty decreased in Limestone County but that the number of vulnerable families are on the rise.
2. Continue to support and find additional funding for the Family Solutions Program offered by the FRC. This program works with families as a "mentor" finding both short and long term solutions for family and children. This may involve many hours of support, guidance and advocacy on behalf of the family to find the best solution for their future.
3. Continue to utilize the Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program of Alabama in order to improve truant's attendance, academic performance, and attachment to school, parents, and teachers.